

## ABSTRACT

Minimally invasive methods and devices for introducing a spinal fixation element into a surgical site in a patient's spinal column are provided. In one embodiment, a dissection tool is provided for separating muscles along a muscle plane without causing damage to the muscles. The dissection tool can also include a lumen extending therethrough for receiving a guide wire. The tool allows the guide wire to be positioned relative to a vertebra, and once properly positioned, the tool can be removed to allow a spinal anchor to be delivered along the guide wire and implanted into the vertebra.